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THE
S C A L E:

O R,

W O M A N weighed with M A N.

A

P O E M.

Inscribed to her ROYAL HIGHNESS

The PRINCESS DOWAGER of WALES.

By J. M. *K*

-----Am I yourself,
But as it were in Sort and Limitation;
To keep with you at Meals, comfort your Bed,
And talk to you sometimes?-----

-----If it be no more;
Portia is Brutus' Harlot, not his Wife.

SHAKESPEAR.

L O N D O N :

Printed for D. WILSON and T. DURHAM, at Plato's Head, near
Round-Court, in the Strand.

MDCCLII.

Dup

THE
S. C. A. E.
FOR
WOMAN WEIGHED WITH M.A.
A
P. O. E. M.

... ..

The Parsons Building, W. A. 1922

Bv I. M.

There is no more
And talk to your daughter;
To keep with you at all,
But talk to her in love and
And I am finished.

2000



[Faint circular stamp, likely from the National Archives]

A R G U M E N T

THE

S C A L E:

OR,

W O M A N weighed with M A N.

C A N T O I

A R G U M E N T.

The Subject; and the Author's Aim. Inscription of the Scale. Reputation for Sense the principal Pride of Men. Their mutual Complaisance on that Head. Women ranked by them in a lower Class. Satire misapplied to flatter this absurd Vanity. Juvenal censured. The great Multitude of his shallow Mimics. Reflections on Mr. Pope and Dr. Swift. The Introduction concluded with an Appeal from Prejudice and Vanity to Reason and Experience. Virtue the common Task of both Sexes. That in the Knowledge and Practice of Virtue true Sense and true Wisdom consist. Which perform their Duty best in general. The Subject of Love, &c. reserved for a Second Canto. Social Merit. Women more eminent for a Principle of Generosity: for Humanity, Compassion, and the Domestic Offices of Life: for Piety: for Public Spirit. The Conclusion.



THE
S C A L L E, &c.
C A N T O I.

BEGIN, my Muse, with bold unborrow'd Praise,
Let us the Sense and Worth of Woman raise:
To their true Standard raise them, if we can;
And shame the proud aspiring Creature, Man:
That henceforth he may curb his rash Disdain;
Nor build Prerogative on Titles vain.

Princess, to You, by Providence's Care,
The Royal Pattern of the British Fair;
Whose Wisdom soars above your Rank, whose Worth
Exceeds your high Pre-eminence of Birth;
(From him deriv'd, whose Patronage and Sword
Religion's amiable Truth restor'd;

B 2 Who

4 The SCALE. Canto 1.

Who gain'd this darling Purpose of his Life,
 But nobly lost Dominions in the Strife)
 To You whose Virtues, in their bright Excess, 15
 Ev'n Foes to George and Liberty confess ;
 A Muse, ambitious of an honest Fame,
 Inscribes the new, the long-neglected Theme :
 Well-pleas'd the Strain of her Address to see
 From just Reproach of Adulation free. 20
 She but re-echoes, in her guiltless Lays,
 The Nation's Sentiments; a People's Praise.---

For Wisdom's Shadow, not for Virtue's Prize,
 Vain Man absurdly with his Neighbour vies.
 To be deem'd honest, void of Guile and Art, 25
 Is but his second humbler Pride of Heart.
 The Brand of Fool, so the wild Passion runs,
 He more than that of Villain fears and shuns.
 Sick of a gaudy Disposition ; hence
 High, Low ; Rich, Poor ; all claim the Title, Sense. 30

This great Preliminary Claim confest ;
 They meet, like Kings, and compromise the rest.
 Man will to Man a Sort of Homage do ;
 Both wise, but one the wiser of the two :
 For both, so nicely pois'd Pretensions are, 35
 Of Sense inherit a sufficient Share.

On

On their own Excellence this Vote they pass ;
But rank the Women in a lower Class.
Thus each He-Fool, whom such vain Maxims guide,
Sees a whole Sex beneath him, in his Pride. 40

Not to reform, rather to flatter Men,
Foul Satire seizes her malignant Pen.
A grateful Victim to the vicious Heart,
Worth feels the Sting of her abusive Art :
While chiefly Woman, helpless Woman bleeds. 45
On her each rhiming Moth of Scandal feeds ;
And, sure his shallow Reader's Taste to hit,
Exhausts on her the Pittance of his Wit.

Rome's Satirist, the foremost of the Band,
Who paints fair Virtue with a Master's Hand, 50
But brutal Lust indelicately draws,
Leads up the Van in this ungen'rous Cause ;
Attacks alike the Living and the Dead,
And withers half the Laurels on his Head.

A thousand Mimics, with a borrow'd Grin, 55
With Wit not their's, on the same Subject fin :
But these, scarce knowing how to rhyme or rail,
Disgrac'd, in their unmanly Purpose fail.

Shame to themselves their pilfer'd Satires bring :
 Their harmless Scandal is without a Sting : 60
 Be therefore they, the lowest of their Kind,
 Too low for Notice, in Oblivion join'd.

Which should to Woman do the wittier Wrong,
 Of late two Giant Writers labour'd long.
 Friends, from the low Disease of Envy clear, 65
 They charm'd, with rival Wit, the Public Ear.
 One to the Summit of Parnassus rose :
 The second stoop'd, and sweep'd the Prize of Prose.
 With Fame, with such a Wealth of Genius blest;
 By no just Cause, no seemly Motive prest; 70
 Why should (alas !) the celebrated Pair,
 Uninjur'd, rashly satirize the Fair ?

Thee chiefly, great among the greatest Names,
 Immortal Bard, my Muse reluctant blames :
 Thee skill'd the sparkling Gem of Worth to raise, 75
 And bid it glow with Elegance of Praise.
 Was it for thee, to Virtue's Friends a Friend,
 From Virtue's Side her Votaries to rend ?
 In thee, Man's Friend, was it a seemly Drift
 To vie with such a Misanthrope as S---ft; 80
 Whose Satire oft Spleen, Party-Zeal, Caprice
 Spirit with Venom, and devote to Vice ?

No.

No. Thine the chaste, thine was the moral Page;
Inspir'd to mend or shame a vicious Age.

In either Sex true Worth, by Satire wrong'd, 85
To such a noble Advocate belong'd.
That Muse which Women of their Right bereaves,
Which scarcely Room for Female Virtue leaves;
That Muse which draws them changeful as the Wind,
Which rainbows on a Cloud their fickle Mind : 90
Had she been zealous to defend their Cause;
She more had merited the World's Applause.

To rouse and aggravate the Pride of Men,
Alas! what needed Satire's partial Pen?
Women too much already we despis'd; 95
Too much our native Privileges priz'd.
No longer let unequal Weights prevail.
Come, let us poise Pretensions in the Scale.

Nature, supremely wise in her Designs,
To both their proper Provinces assigns : 100
Virtue their common Task, their End, their Good,
But Virtue vary'd to their Sex's Mood :
So vary'd as the Rules of Life require ;
Plain Rules which Heav'n and Reason's Light inspire.

Reason's

Reason's great Excellence, her highest Art 105
 Appears in fashioning the Moral Heart:
 In clearly teaching human Minds to know
 What they to God, themselves, their Neighbour owe;
 How to discern, with Penetration nice,
 The Boundaries and first Degrees of Vice. 110
 True Sense in such high Knowledge chiefly lies;
 And sure to practise it is to be wise.

Which of the two perform their Duty best?
 If that be made the Touch-Stone and the Test;
 To Life, my Muse, to common Life refer, 115
 For this plain Truth, That fewer Women err;
 Still fewer to the Pitch of Man offend.
 Their Vices curbed, in certain Limits end.
 We, boldly bad, despise the Checks of Blame;
 While Woman sins with the Restraint of Shame. 120
 More rooted in her Heart, by Maxims right,
 Reluctant Virtue seldom leaves her quite:
 Except when Ravagers, the Sons of Lust,
 Have laid her Virgin Honour in the Dust.

Pure Love to paint, high Source of human Bliss, 125
 To paint the Passion in its wild Excess;
 Of either Sex, when Love or Lust prevails,
 To weigh the Merit in contending Scales ;

Might,

Might, as a Part consider'd, seem too long :
 Be therefore this, in copious Matter strong,
 Singly the Theme of a succeeding Song.

Say, Muse, in social Merit which excels ?---
 With Woman chief the Charm of Bounty dwells.
 To Worth a zealous Patron, in her Heart,
 She does, or would the Recompence impart : 135
 But, Virtue, mourn; and, high Pretensions, fall;
 For Woman's Power to recompense is small.
 By partial Law, the lordly Makers hold
 Undue Proportions of their much-lov'd Gold.
 Of this, their Idol, if you would partake, 140
 Mean Courtship to some guilty Passion make.
 Serve that; their Pimp, their Parasite, their Tool;
 Their Wisdom's, any Thing but Virtue's, Fool.
 Misers to Worth, not unobserv'd but clear;
 On Vice they lavish Thousands by the Year. 145

Wouldst thou grow wealthy; to Distinction rise ?
 Call the Knave honest; call the Blockhead wise :
 To Dunces Wit, give Freedom to the Slave;
 And flatter Cowards with the Title, Brave.
 Extol, this Maxim will avail thee most, 150
 The vain Man's Head at ev'ry Rival's Cost.

More sensible the Fair of human Woe,
 Lend sweet Attention to the Tears that flow.
 Touch'd with the Mourner's Misery, they grieve;
 Prone, while they weep and listen, to relieve. 155

Unfeeling Man assumes the Face of Art:
 His Grief is often but an Actor's Part.
 All thine, O Woman, is the bleeding Heart.

A Crowd of Virtues hence, as from their Root,
 Fair to the Sight, like lovely Roses, shoot: 160
 Virtues which harmonize the Frame within;
 And purge the Passions from the Dross of Sin:
 For all domestic Offices of Life
 Which qualify the Mother, Daughter, Wife.
 Where this high Principle of Goodness fails, 165
 Plain Vice or mask'd Hypocrisy prevails.
 Without Humanity; the specious Strain,
 The Garb of Heroes, and of Saints, is vain.

Come, Piety, thou Queen of Virtues; here,
 Attended by thy Sister Truth, appear: 170
 Of foolish wicked Man the Jest and Scorn,
 Come, and thy female Votaries adorn.
 Justice, their Stamp of Character to raise,
 Adds here the fairest brightest Beam of Praise.

At

At Heav'n's high Providence we laugh or fret: 175
But wiser Woman fears her Maker yet.

Where most, where least does Love of Country fail?
Place, ponder Public Spirit in the Scale.
In former Ages this was Britain's Boast.
Millions of Lives in the great Cause were lost. 180
By this her Heroes and her Patriots led,
On War's grim Theatre, on Scaffolds bled.
Zealous and panting for their Country's Bliss,
Her Hamdens, Sidneys, Ruffels bled for this.
All else, as the Majestic Cause drew near, 185
Did worthless to the Great and Good appear:
While yet vile Luxury was little known;
Nor viler Avarice did Britons own.

Pelf, Pleasure of their vicious Sons the Task!
Boldly we worship Gold without a Mask. 199
Gain is the Point, the Principle profest.
Now Public Spirit grows a Public Jest.
Posterity! (We laugh, we reason thus)
What has Posterity to do with us?
Just for our Time the gasping Nation save: 195
'Tis all we modern, mole-ey'd Mortals crave.

While, Woman, here thy Virtue blazes forth ;
 It crowns thy Triumph in the Scale of Worth.
 By Man this Subject wantonly profan'd,
 Has ever sacred in thy Thoughts remain'd.
 On such plain Points, where human Sense begins,
 No Female Wit, no She-Blasphemer sins.
 Man's is the Profanation ; his the Crime,
 Unknown, unblush'd for, in our Father's Time.

Ye Fair, your Wisdom and your Charms exert, 205
 To mend and moralize the smitten Heart.
 Before you listen to the Tales of Love ;
 Our Passion first, and Principles improve.
 But chief, O chiefly let the Mother's Tongue
 With early Love of Country taint her Young ;
 Sow soon, deep sow the Seeds of future Fame ;
 And teach ev'n Babes to hush Britannia's Name.



ARGUMENT
The Dialogue between a Critic and the Author
their Seducers of Women justified. Their deceitful
and barbarous Proceedings laid open. How fatal the
Consequences are to the Subject; and what an important
Lesson is taught to the chief Seducers.

THE
SCALES:
OR,
The Dialogue between a Critic and the Author
on the subject of the Rights of Women; and on the
importance of the Cause of the Oppressed.

WOMAN weighed with MAN.

CANTO II.
The Dialogue between a Critic and the Author
on the subject of the Rights of Women; and on the
importance of the Cause of the Oppressed.

A R G U M E N T.

An Introductory Dialogue between a Critic and the Author. Seducers of Women satirized. Their deceitful and barbarous Proceedings laid open. How fatal the Consequences are to the Seduced; and what an iniquitous Sentence is passed upon them. Who the chief Seducers. The Gratification of their Lust a sort of Human Sacrifice. Their frothy Defence and Reasonings exposed. Honour, their boasted Rule of Action, explained and defined. What Women Honour skreens; and whom it marks for Destruction. The base Deceit and Frauds which Honour warrants. Mortal Resentment against Friends who violate the Marriage-Bed; on what grounded: the Consequence. A Supposition in Favour of Honour; and a fair Inference from that Supposition: Men of Honour being the Judges. The whole Comparison in this Article briefly stated; and a Decision given.--Love the Subject. Described, as dictated by Nature, and governed by Reason and Virtue. What the Test of Love; and why few Men fit to bear the Trial. How the false Passion operates in Men before and after Marriage. Effects which their Change of Behaviour naturally produces. Esteem the sole Preservative of Love. An important Caution to Men on this Head. Female Love more influenced by real or seeming Merit; more constant and more generous: why Romantic in some Degree. The servile Art and the Mercenary Views of Men branded. Another capital Decision in Favour of Women. By Way of Conclusion, the Dialogue resumed between the Author and the Critic.



THE
SCALED, &c.

CANTO II.

“ **A**LL this and more they will object. Forbear.
“ In Time be caution’d by your Friends to fear.”---
Fear whom? Fear what? No; bid me rather
hope.---

“ Have you not censur’d Swift; and censur’d Pope?”---
As Wits, both are the Subject of my Praise. 5
My Muse between the two divides the Bays.---

“ But then she wounds them in a dearer Part;
“ Their moral Character; their hidden Heart.”---
Not Pope. Him (mark the Censure in it’s Place)
She scarcely could with higher Titles grace.--- 10

“ On both allow the Censure to be fair;
“ Why shock their fond Admirers? Have a Care:
“ High stands, all Envy dumb, their present Fame.”---
I must, I will, where Reason bids me, blame.---

“ The

“ The Muse, the Mistress, or the Friend we love, } 15
 “ Who censure fairly, still our Anger move.
 “ Ev’n candid L-----n may not approve.” }

To such as him I could, with honest Zeal,
 For the whole Justice of my Cause appeal.
 ’Mong those for a dishonour’d Sex who plead, 20
 See L-----n the Van of Virtue lead.
 Of Female Worth, the Bliss which Women bring,
 How sweetly does the plaintive Heroe sing:
 While o’er an Angel’s, a Clarissa’s Urn
 His Heart and all th’ assembled Muses mourn? 25
 A L-----n, ye Fair, is seldom found:
 But artful wicked Lovelaces abound.

Rise, Satire ; with indignant Pencil, draw
 Those Ravagers who ’scape the Scourge of Law :
 Who, Siren-like, invade the Virgin’s Breast; 30
 Keen to devour her Innocence and Rest.
 Amidst their Vows, their Adulation, Lies,
 Unmask the Traytors to the Fair-one’s Eyes.

As soon as Beauty’s early Blossom blows ;
 While yet the Mind nor Fraud nor Falshood knows; 35
 By Snares, which scarcely wiser Women shun,
 The Novice falls; by specious Snares undone.

In

In artful Guise, a Crowd of Foes appear,
Who buzz Esteem and Passion in her Ear.
Virtue's vain Title, Honour's boasted Name, 40
They make the Mask and Vehicle of Shame;
Highly respectful in their Love, 'till Art
Gives full Possession of the Fair-one's Heart:
But then, no longer lowly Vassals, they
Seem metamorphos'd into Beasts of Prey. 45
Uncheck'd by Pity, conscious of their Pow'r,
Like Wolves, they watch the first unguarded Hour;
Spring to their Game, remorseless in their Haste;
And lay the sacred Fold of Virtue waste.

From that dire Moment Hell and Horror rise: 50
Peace from her violated Mansion flies.
Hourly with Sighs the troubled Bosom heaves;
Which Hope, Life's latest Consolation leaves.
Succeeds, in chearful Innocence's room,
An everlasting, a remorseful Gloom. 55
Of Honour, in her conscious Mind, bereft;
Without a Friend, to save or pity, left;
Ev'n by the Robber of her Peace and Fame,
Left soon to Poverty, Derision, Shame;
Oblig'd to prostitute herself for Hire, 60
The Sport of Drunkards and of lewd Desire:

What

What can the poor deserted Sinner do?
 Lost by Degrees, all Worth forsakes her too.
 Perhaps, to make the Tragic Scene compleat,
 Herself is doom'd to perish in the Street.

65

Be still, rash Censure, shall the Pride of Man
 Presume the Depths of Providence to scan?
 Howe'er by purblind Mortals understood;
 These are, ev'n where unfathomable, good.
 Yet sure th' unequal Lot of Woman here,
 Compar'd to lordly Man's, may seem severe.
 What scarce a Tréspass is allow'd in him,
 In her is deem'd a Death-deserving Crime;
 A Stain, a Wound, so mortal and impure,
 No Tears can wash it, no Repentance cure:
 Harsh Sentence on the fair Offender past,
 By sinful Man: and therefore not the last.
 'Tis well for her, since not on Earth forgiven;
 The Scale of Man is not the Scale of Heaven.

70

75

Young Men, to you, the Robbers of the Fair,
 Who make their Ruin your Delight and Care;
 Who first beat down their Virtue to the Ground,
 And whisper next the shameful Triumph round;
 Whom Reason's Voice has long reprov'd in vain:
 Satire to you directs her angry Strain.

85

Gross

Canto 2. The SCALE.

19

Gross vicious Sense and Habits unrefin'd
Mar ev'ry noble Function of the Mind.
You see perhaps, but will not feel the Force,
The Charms of Virtue's amiable Course:
Else, for a momentary guilty Gust,
For a loose Rapture of unbridled Lust; 90
You would not cancel Nature's sacred Ties;
Nor joy, like Fiends, in human Sacrifice.

When strongly push'd; to parry Reason's Stroke,
One utters, in his own Defence, a Joke. 95
A second loudly laughs, as in a Fit:
Another answers with a Flash of Wit.
Some few perhaps, more void of Shame, pretend
That thus they chiefly compass Nature's End;
Nature which here imposes no Restraint; 100
Nor rates by this the Sinner and the Saint.
A Woman's free Compliance, Will, Desire,
Are all, they say, which Nature's Rules require.

What Will?----Young, open, with an honest Heart,
She falls a Prey to the Seducer's Art; 105
To Shews of Honour, which deceitful prove;
To Rakes, to Sharpers at the Game of Love.
Is this the fair Compliance, Will, Desire,
Which Nature, Justice, Equity require?

Learn, weak and wilful Foes to Reason, hence 110
 How wild a War ye wage with common Sense :
 In that distracted Situation place
 Some near Relation.---Frame a milder Case,
 If this seem shocking ; and suppose that, still
 She safe, the Man has only sinn'd in Will.--- 115
 " Ruin my Sister ! Stab my Daughter's Fame !
 " Mark them for Harlots with the Brand of Shame !
 " Out, angry Sword ; avenging Weapons, rise :
 " He, who but offers such Dishonour, dies."---
 Whence these new Sentiments, this high-flown Wrath ;
 This loud Denial of your former Faith ? 121
 Would not your conscious Heart at once rejoin,
 " The Case is alter'd ; for the Case is mine ?"---
 By partial Self such the Distinctions thrown
 'Twixt other Men's Pretensions and our own. 125

Instead of Virtue, long cashier'd and lost,
 Another Guide, Honour's strict Rule, you boast.
 Say, what is Honour ? Let it be defin'd.
 A Farce, a Mixture of a motley Kind :
 Part Vice, Part Virtue ; Gothic in it's Frame ;
 Proceeding half from Pride and half from Shame :
 A Monster foul within and fair without ;
 An Angel upwards, with a cloven Foot.

To

To give a Definition more concise;
Honour is Virtue reconcil'd to Vice. 135

Chiefly from rampant guileful Honour's Snare
The Rules and Roof of Friendship skreen the Fair.
Young Virgins too, for high Descent esteem'd,
Are sacred and inviolable deem'd.
In either Case who Crimes of Love commit, 140
Must strait the fashionable Title quit.
Here Honour's Laws with Reason's Rule agree:
But then all other lewd Attempts are free;
Wives, Sisters, Daughters, a promiscuous Game,
Presum'd fair Objects of a guilty Flame. 145

Not less the Means are than the Purpose foul;
Fraud and Deceit, a Masquerade of Soul.
Candour and Truth, the lovely Twins, retire;
Far banish'd from these Scenes of loose Desire.
Who Vows indeed, who strict Engagements break, 150
Are tax'd with high Dishonour: Fools! to make
A needless Waste of Promises precise;
Where unprov'd the whole Behaviour lies:
Where Frauds in Action, spight of Common Sense,
The Giant Honour titles fair at once. 155

Enrag'd,

Enrag'd, why does your Friend, with boist'rous Strain,
 When violated in his Wife, complain;
 But that high Wrong is done, dire Mischief wrought,
 Beyond Forgiveness in his Scale of Thought?
 To wrong a Friend, Foe, Stranger, whom you please;
 Is but one Crime, which differs in Degrees: 161
 And Crimes, the gloomy Subject of Remorse,
 Have only this Distinction, bad or worse.

Ev'n if the Sin consisted less in Lust,
 Than in the Breach of Friendship and of Trust; 165
 That Reason would alone suffice to prove
 A more unworthy Breach of Trust in Love.
 Conceiv'd a Man of Probity, not Art;
 As such admitted to the Fair-one's Heart;
 Strongly belov'd, confided in, esteem'd; 170
 Nay the Protector of her Honour deem'd:
 Who, thus intrusted, in an evil Hour,
 Half steals, half ravishes fair Virtue's Flow'r;
 Blasts her that loves him with a lewd Embrace,
 And robs her of her dearest Jewel, Peace: 175
 What Name, what Title is his proper Due?
 Silent my Pen:---say, Man of Honour, thou.

Thus, adverse in the Scales, here Worth appears,
 Rich but unripen'd by the School of Years;

There

Canto 2.

The S C A L E.

23

There Lust, lurking beneath the Mask of Love ; 180

In Heart a Vultur, but in Form a Dove.

Weigh them ; the Tempters with the Tempted weigh ;

The Women prey'd-on with the Men of Prey,

(Of whom so long the List in either Class,

They might for almost half the Species pass) 185

Woman, the Dupe of Honour, suffers most :

But viler Man has little Cause to boast.

When fairly weigh'd ; in spight of Honour's Dream ;

His Scale is lighter, and will kick the Beam.

Love next my nobler Theme. Explain it Muse: 190

Rescue great Nature from a long Abuse.

Off with the Mask of Ages. Let us see

The Passion in it's primitive Degree :

Nor lost in Clouds, nor crawling in the Dust ;

Nor mix'd with mad Idolatry nor Lust. 195

Describe Affection where Esteem presides ;

Which Reason dictates, and which Virtue guides.

Such who by Nature's wise Prescription love,

Whose Flame their Heads as well as Hearts approve ;

Such only this high Principle inspires 200

With strong indeed, but elegant Desires :

For Love is Friendship of an upper Cast ;

Like Metal ripen'd into Gold at last.

In

In less Esteem, who reasons thus, reputes
 The grosser Appetites, the Bliss of Brutes. 205
 His highest Nuptial Happiness he finds
 Plac'd in the nobler Intercourse of Minds.
 From thence that generous Affection flows,
 Which in the duly smitten Bosom glows:
 Which never from the much-lov'd Object errs; 210
 But this to Self, with comely Zeal, prefers.

Who, madly with the Fire of Beauty smit,
 The Force of Wisdom, or the Charms of Wit,
 Eyes his own Pleasure, in his am'rous Mood;
 Nor chiefly rates the Fair-one's Fame and Good; 215
 Courting on any Terms his Passion's Ease:
 Not Love, the Rage of Lust is his Disease.
 This the great Witness; this the Lover's Test,
 By which to prove the Passion in his Breast.

Few Men, if Men would speak with Candour here,
 Could well the strict Examination bear. 221

They wisely to conceal their inward State,
 Of pure disinterested Passion prate.
 Themselves may sometimes think it no Disguise;
 Deceiv'd: for rank Possession is the Prize, 225
 On which they fix, with steady View, their Eyes.

Angelic

Angelic Extasies, Flames, Darts, Raeks, Wheels
 (Whims which a hurt Imagination feels)
 All end in this: and hence we plainly find
 Why Love a Riddle deem'd, and Cupid blind. 230

While raging Passion in the Bosom burns,
 Madden'd with Joys and Jealousy by Turns;
 While Flames and Fire in their full Force remain;
 Before Possession cures the sighing Swain;
 While Lust lies hid in Wonder and Esteem: 235
 How pure his Wishes, his Pretensions seem!
 His Lordly Pride of Sex humbles it's Crest:
 Since greatly wise one Woman is confest.
 "Thy Words, my Fair, are as thy Looks divine;
 "And all Minerva's Epithets are thine. 240
 "Me blest, if thou propitious prove! Since Heaven
 "Has such a Phoenix to my Passion given,
 "That this, for Life, must ever last the same;
 "A perfect, pure and undiminish'd Flame."

So talks, and often so believes, in Truth, 245
 The love-sick, green and unexperienc'd Youth.
 His beardless Understanding, void of Art,
 So talks in pure Simplicity of Heart.
 Of such a Prelude, wild, romantic, vain,
 The sure, the fatal Consequence is plain. 250

No sooner is the Magic Zone unloos'd
 (Long-wish'd-for Bliss, to lawless Lust refus'd)
 When hymen'd Virtue to the Lover bends;
 Forthwith his Dream of Bliss Elysian ends.

Now rank Idolatry prevails no more : 255

For Fancy's gay Delirium is o'er.

She, whose least Frown did the pale Sigher awe;

Whose Will was Wisdom, and whose Word a Law;

No Goddess now nor Angel deem'd, at best

Is, as a pretty prattling Fool, carest. 260

Let her once aim at Censure or Advice:

" I grant your Table and your Toilet nice.

" No Woman lives with a genteeler Air.

" Dress, Cards and Custards are the Sex's Care.

" Mere household Wisdom is the Task assign'd. 265

" This therefore, as your proper Province, mind :

" But, for all Points of higher Reason; these

" Are our Prerogative, if Women please."

Depriv'd, but not unconscious of her Claim;

Must she not feel such foul Contempt and Shame? 270

Feel and resent this sudden Breach of Vows?

While at her Feet perhaps a Stranger bows;

Marks the wild Scene of Conjugal Neglect;

And breaths his guilty Passion with Respect.

All

All other Hopes of lasting Love are vain :
 Esteem alone is Nature's triple Chain.
 Where this strong Fetter fails on either Side,
 Soon will unseemly Strife their Hearts divide.
 If Men had Prudence and a proper Fear,
 They would bestow their chief Attention here. 280
 Instead of checking, with injurious Bit,
 The Modest Sallies of a Woman's Wit;
 Their Task should be by Culture, proper Praise,
 Still more her Pride of Sentiment to raise :
 By Reasoning alone her Will to lead, 285
 And banish Trifles, from her Heart and Head.
 Who the Fair chuses, smit with Beauty's Charms,
 As a mere Play-thing for his longing Arms;
 Not as an amiable Friend for Life :
 He for an Harlot weds her, not a Wife. 290

Less sunk in Vice a Woman's Passion proves.
 She, with a purer Sense of Merit, loves.
 Worth, real or appearing such, her Aim :
 More steady, fix'd and generous her Flame.
 What of Romance, exceeding Nature's Bounds, 295
 Taints her young Years, she builds on specious Grounds.
 Sincere herself, with credulous Esteem,
 Fondly she fancies Men are what they seem :

is, somewhat vain as well as grateful, grows
 The Dupe of Incense and of idle Vows. 300
 Hence high Conceptions of her Lover rise;
 'Till she believes, exalted to the Skies
 (Such the wild Force of Passion and of Whim)
 Herself a Goddess, and an Angel him.
 'Tis Men who, with intoxicating Speech, 305
 With servile Art, this giddy Lesson teach.

O sacred Truth, from whose untainted Source
 Wisdom and Worth derive their Charms and Force;
 How mean, how miserable is the Task,
 Which toils to cover Nature with a Mask! 310
 The Man, who thee from Love excluded first,
 His own, and all succeeding Ages curst:
 For thence a thousand dreadful Mischiefs flow;
 Scenes of dire Discord and Domestic Woe.
 Wedlock soon bids all mock Pretensions end: 315
 But Scorn and Hatred in the Rear attend.

Shall Strains, which vile Hypocrisy reprove,
 Not brand the mercenary Men of Love?
 Men void of ev'ry Principle but Self,
 And solely smitten with the Charms of Pelf: 320
 Fortune's keen Hunters; an enormous Band,
 Scatter'd, like hungry Locusts, o'er the Land.

Sense,

Sense, Beauty, Worth, with all the Graces crown'd,
 If Wealth is wanting, are an empty Sound.
 Not blush, ye reptile Worshippers of Gold, 325
 Who, young in Years, in hoary Vice are old
 While your false Flames, disssembled Raptures rise;
 Not blush at your unmanly mean Disguise
 Since, oft possessing a sufficient Store,
 On any Terms, you wildly covet more; 330
 Have it. Your abject infamous Regard
 Buys dear and richly merits the Reward.

Except where Parents, awfully severe,
 With their high Will, their Menace, interfere;
 Women, more duely delicate than us, 235
 But seldom prostitute the Passion thus.
 Less tainted with the fordid base Desire,
 They boast a stronger, boast a purer Fire;
 A better Claim to Truth and Virtue prove,
 And shame us with their honourable Love. --- 340

Here rests my Muse:—Say, Critic sage and nice;
 Once more say, what your Censure, your Advice?
 “ I say the Subject, should the whole be true,
 “ Must seem ill chosen, since the Writer you.
 “ A Bard, high-thron'd upon the sacred Hill, 345
 “ Has Leave to rage and bluster, if he will:

" But for a Novice, for a Name unknown;
 " On him the Smile fits better than the Frown.
 " You should exalt, not humble haughty Man.
 " To please his Passions were a wiser Plan; 350
 " If you to gain his loud Applause aspire."---
 Yes, if I labour'd for the Sake of Hire.--
 " Since Profit you despise, consider Fame."---
 Mine is, or should be, Sir, a nobler Aim.---
 " Prithee, what Aim?" An injur'd Sex to right.--- 355
 " It makes me laugh. An injur'd Sex! Good-night."---
 Why laugh? Is this a Laugh-deserving View?---
 " An injur'd Sex! Adieu, my Friend; adieu."



A R G U M E N T

THE
S C A L E:

W O M A N weighed with M A N.

C A N T O III.

A R G U M E N T.

Sense, and Woman's Claim to it, the Subject of this Canto. Wisdom almost too divine an Epithet for Human Nature. A Comparison in Wisdom waved. Common Sense the Subject in Dispute: defined: how rare a thing it is: not acquired without Labour and Study. That Common is the proper Epithet of Reason, not of Sense. Reason essential to Man, and Heaven's Witness in the Breast. Literal Common Sense the same with Conscience. Modesty the general Companion of solid Sense: inseparable from Wisdom: in Men a rare Quality: almost the Characteristic of Women. Pride of Understanding in Men the great Source of Error. In the Fair Sex Humility the Safeguard of Truth. A Tyrannical Disposition the chief Blemish of our Nature: descends to the Cottage. Reputation for Sense the great Bone of Contention. The shameful Oppression which Women suffer in this Respect; and the mean Wrong done to them by Witlings. Advice to the Ridiculers of Female Understanding. Their own Pretensions, to Knowledge of the World, Elegance of Taste, Wit and Humour; weighed. Vanity, the grand Foible of Man, rebuked in the Conclusion.



SCA L E, &c.

CANTO III.

WHILE, rous'd afresh, my keen advent'rous Muse
 Her noble, her unpilfer'd Task pursues;
 And, arm'd for Women, in a bold Defence,
 Urges their long-disputed Claim to Sense:
 Distinguish'd Portia, She, with modest Fear,
 Courts thy propitious, courts thy vacant Ear.
 To whom, as Sense the Subject of my Song,
 Can this Address, to whom but thee belong?
 For Sense extoll'd, ev'n by the Voice of Men,
 O smile on Woman's Advocate, my Pen.
 Should this, however zealous in the Cause,
 With Strain not meriting thy wish'd Applause,
 Perhaps sink far beneath the lofty Theme;
 Be the Faults cover'd by the Writer's Aim.

Wisdom, much talk'd of, seldom met with here, 15
 Thy secret Residence, O Wisdom, where?
 Portia, say where (since who can better tell?)
 Where does the lovely Goddess deign to dwell?
 What Chains, what Charms her flying Footsteps hold?
 The Bond of Pleasure or the Blaze of Gold? 20
 Does Pow'r attract her? Can the Scepter'd Race,
 At Will, this Gem amidst their Jewels place?
 Her Price above the Diamond's Purchase soars;
 Above the Ruby's and the richest Ore's.
 Not all the pompous Sultans of the East, 25
 Wallowing in Wealth, shall bribe her for a Guest.
 Vain foolish Wantonness of human Pride,
 To dream that Wisdom can with Vice reside!
 From close-link'd Virtue never seen apart,
 Silent she sparkles in the spotless Heart. 30

High Wisdom, pure as her Æthereal Birth,
 But rarely sojourns with the Sons of Earth.
 To her the Scepter of the Skies is given:
 She reigns the Daughter and the Queen of Heaven.
 When she, to visit Mortals, Virtue's Friends, 35
 From Angels, from the Sons of God descends;
 Chiefly to Woman, their great Likeness here,
 The Seraph comes; her Votary to cheer.---

Canto 3 The SCALE.

35

But hold, rash Hand; the lifted Ballance wave.
Thyself the faulty needles Labour save: 40
For Wisdom is an Epithet divine;
Just Solomon's, and scarcely, Plato, thine.

That most uncommon Thing, call'd *Common Sense*;
Which all Men challenge, with a bold Pretence,
And deem the Birth-right of their Sex and State; 45
Is here alone the Subject in Debate.

What art thou, *Common Sense*? Thyself explain.
O come, and let the Graces fill thy Train.
My great Apollo thou, be thou my Guide.
Except where Truth and Common Sense preside; 50
Parnassius, for the Dreams of Fancy fit,
At best is but a Wilderness of Wit.

Reason's right Use is *Common Sense*. How few
This Task of Nature with Attention view.
Foes to stern Study, Men at random think. 55
They nod and swallow Notions, while they wink.
Crude unexamined Follies fill their Heads.
Here idle Wit, there Superstition leads.
Example most, many mere Whim directs.
Alas! Who fairly reasons? Who reflects? 60

This Plant of Common Sense, so rarely found,
Grows no where but in cultivated Ground.
Unless up-rooted by the Lab'rer's Toil,
Rank Weeds will over-run the richest Soil;
Nature's wild Moisture turn to barren Mud; 65
And Reason's Shoots be stifled in the Bud.---

Ev'n in low Crafts to gain a proper Skill,
Pains, Time and Teaching must attend the Will.
Void of these needful Aids, the Head and Hand
Are soon, both helpless, at an utter Stand. 70
Some few perhaps, more docile than the rest,
With a Sagacity, like Instinct, blest,
The Wheels of Art so suddenly discern;
They rather seem to recollect than learn.
But, where Things err from their establish'd Course, 75
Such rare Examples are of little Force.

Is Sense, the fairest noblest Art of Man,
His Judge of Nature and of Nature's Plan;
Which Truth and Falshood in the Ballance lays,
To form his Taste, Belief, Contempt and Praise: 80
Is that great Science to Perfection brought,
Without the least Apprenticeship of Thought?
This scarcely Nature's Fools will speak aloud:
Yet such the plain Pretensions of the Crowd.

Fast

Fast as their crude Opinions spring to Light; 85
Hence comes their Title to suppose them right.

Instead of *Common Sense*, Title absurd,
Place *Common Reason* as the proper Word.
Of this indeed all human Minds partake.
It is the noble Essence of their Make;
Heav'n's Witness, in the Breast, of Right and Wrong,
Against the vile Blasphemer's idle Tongue.
With other Men we juggle in Discourse;
And boldly call the better Cause the worse:
But still, for Reason's Moral Voice is plain, 95
We labour to deceive ourselves in vain.

Reason or *Instinct*, call her what you will,
Conscience must needs her inward Task fulfill.
Knowledge and Sense, which keen Reflections bring,
Serve but to sharpen her untutor'd Sting. 100
This all, howe'er deny'd, must feel within,
Who grossly 'gainst the Light of Nature sin.
Yes, Heav'n, to leave us void of all Defence,
Endows us deeply with a Moral Sense.
If Truth and Meaning should attend the Name, 105
Then *Common Sense* and *Conscience* are the same.
But this Men boast not: rather they conceal
The Worm which they within their Bosom feel.

With

28 With solid Sense, as a Companion, join'd
 True Modesty we seldom fail to find :
 Chiefly, where Wisdom builds her fairest Seat,
 There the coy Goddess chuses her Retreat.
 Eager I quote, a glaring Proof to be,
 Thee, wise Athenian; Virtue's Martyr, thee.
 O sent of Heav'n; with merciful Intent,
 In Heathen Nature's purblind Reason sent
 'To cure the gross Impediments of Sight,
 And pave the Way for a diviner Light :
 While Athens saw, but saw with jealous Eyes,
 Thy Wisdom far above Example rise ;
 While this Greece own'd; by loud Conviction prest,
 While this ev'n Priests, in Oracles, confest :
 Alone, O lowly Sage, thy modest Mind
 Remain'd to such applauded Wisdom blind.
 " God only wise : to doubt the Part of Man,
 " Where certain Truth escapes his narrow Span.
 " Virtue's pure Precepts and himself to know,
 " Is his chief Knowledge and his Task below.
 Thy Words, as well thy great Disciples vouch,
 Thy firm Persuasion, Socrates, was such.
 In thee restrain'd, proud Science check'd her Flight;
 Nor sought to soar above her humble Height.

Since

Since Humbleness of Mind, with modest Gait,
Does on imperfect Human Wisdom wait;
In Men seen seldom; or, if seen, soon lost,
The lovely Badge adheres to Women most. 135
While we, with persecuting Zeal, contend
By Force the stubborn Faith of Souls to bend;
While Sword, Fire, Faggot, Instruments of Dread,
Strange Proofs, the Pride of our Opinions spread; 140
Less boastful of their Understandings, they
The Rule of Sense and Socrates obey.
We, Lords of Reason, as we fancy, born,
All Bars, all Limits of Discretion scorn.
Our Right to judge we plead by Nature's Bull, 145
And, like high Princes, put it forth at full.
Many, nay most, in some peculiar Things,
As Fancy leads them, are Despotic Kings.
Faith's mystic Points, the Bounds of Good and Ill
Are strait decided by their Sovereign Will. 150
To prove their Title equal to their Boast,
New, singular Opinions please them most;
Which, unexamined, oft espous'd by Chance,
They first perhaps, like Men in Sport, advance;
Next by Degrees, with growing Warmth, defend; 155
Till, piqu'd, the Men of Wit in Biggots end.
Pride is the fruitful Source of Error. Thence,
In Sciences, Religion, Common Sense,
A thousand Whims of Heresy commence.

More

More from this fatal Root of Error free, 160
 Plain Woman loves with Nature's Eye to see.
 Her honest Understanding, unrefin'd,
 Sins not, thro' wilful Affectation blind;
 Nor seeks a singular Mistake to find.
 If oft she from this golden Maxim errs, 165
 And Subtleties to simple Sense prefers;
 She courts not there the Bubble of Applause.
 It is not Pride. Humility the Cause.
 Brow-beat, scar'd, over-aw'd a thousand Ways,
 To boist'rous Man the Compliment she pays. 170
 With Frailties, Follies, Vices cover'd o'er,
 Weak as we are, and sick of ev'ry Sore;
 In that low Pride, which loves to tyrannise,
 The first great Blemish of our Nature lies.
 Not only where, high-seated on the Throne, 175
 A Prince consults his lawless Will alone;
 Nor yet where Wealth her lofty Forehead rears,
 There only Wantonness of Power appears.
 From Rank to Rank the flowing Vice descends;
 Till the dry Channel in a Cottage ends. 180

By Pow'r above him gall'd, the Man of Might
 Makes his Resentment on the weaker light.

They

They next, provok'd and greedy to devour,
Bid the still weaker feel their Weight of Pow'r.
Thus each, by Turns oppressing or oppress'd, 185
Loses his own and breaks his Neighbour's Rest.
But chief in Sense the great Oppression lies:
For Power and Rank and Wealth are ever wise.
Would you buy Safety from the Man you fear;
Fail not to pay your humble Homage here. 190
Court his high Judgment, imitate his Ways;
And sooth him with the Tribute of your Praise:
Left rous'd to Wrath the Pride of Haman be;
Then Woe to Worth that will not bow the Knee.---
If false the Charge, Shame is the Poet's Due: 195
Blush, Human Nature, if the Charge be true.

So low the Stations, small the Power of most;
In them this Stream of Tyranny seems lost.
Scourg'd by proud Wealth, and govern'd by the Bit,
They seem alone to fawn in Fetters fit. 200
But to the lowly Cottage trace him; still
You'll find the Slave a Monarch in his Will.
Oblig'd to bow the Neck where others come,
The little Tyrant will be wise at Home:
And there the weaker Vessel finds of Course, 205
His Scale of Wisdom is the Scale of Force.

Us'd more or less, in this Domestic Yoke,
 To hear her Reason treated as a Joke;
 To find her Claim to Common Sense not born;
 She meets elsewhere with a more humbling Scorn; 210
 Meets, ev'ry noble Effort to perplex,
 With the Derision of a Lordly Sex;
 Who strait, if Women ought but Trifles know,
 The Title Wisdom, with a Sneer, bestow;
 Nor blush to bid the Cheek of Beauty glow, } 215

Witlings, mean is your proud and partial Sneer.
 Not so the Signs of solid Sense appear.
 Esteem and Praise, where Sense and Nature guide,
 Men, fairly measur'd by the Scale, divide.
 Here rul'd by Shame, if not by Virtue's Voice, 220
 Sense, eagle-ey'd, perceives no room for Choice:
 Since Praise, if richly due to Men or Things,
 A sure Disgrace on the Refuser brings.
 But where the lucid Twins, Worth, Wisdom meet,
 These with their Favour rising Merit greet. 225
 While haggard Envy blasts, by scornful Ways,
 It's tender Buds; they cherish them with Praise;
 Afford a Shelter to the young and weak,
 And prompt the silent modest Tongue to speak.

Ye, whose high Ridicule falls on the Fair; 230
 Who deem the Bud of Sense in Women rare:
 Put home the Question to yourselves, and see
 First the true Standard of your own Degree.
 Away with ev'ry self-deceiving Art:
 For once perform a wise and manly Part; 235
 Explore the barren Head and little Heart.
 The Muse, should difficult the Task appear,
 With her auxiliary Scale is near.

For Knowledge of the World and human Life
 You first contend, with bold ambitious Strife. 240
 Vain Fools! what know ye?---“ Men and Manners.”---

Men!

Say, who the best, and who the wisest then?---
 “ The best are Virtue's Friends.”---The wisest who?---
 “ In one Respect,---the Friends of Virtue too.”---
 With an ill Grace your forc'd Confessions fall: 245
 But, Triflers, know, this one Respect is all.
 While the mad dreaming Multitude, while you
 Strange Schemes, in Quest of Happiness, pursue;
 Like Novices, on human Life reflect,
 And Bliss from Vice and Vanities expect: 250
 Each skilful Judge of Truth and Nature flies
 From the gay Scenes where Death in Ambush lies.

The wise indeed of either Sex, the good,
 Temper'd by Virtue's amiable Mood,
 Are prone to be deceiv'd with specious Art. 255
 Plain is the Cause; their Innocence of Heart.
 Thus oft the subtle Hypocrite, the Knave,
 Arm'd with low Cunning, triumphs o'er the Brave.
 Abhorring all Suspicion, nobly blind,
 Women and Heroes, partial to their Kind, } 260
 The Villain late and with Reluctance find.

Now boast the Badges of a narrow Soul;
 Your sage Distrust and doubting Sense extoll.
 Nay boast the Buckler of a vicious Breast;
 Since this your Brother Knaves will baffle best. 265
 O Wretches, Aliens to the Sweets of Life,
 Jealous alike of Servant, Friend or Wife!
 On Earth if sacred Confidence must fail;
 If wild Suspicion and Distrust prevail;
 Men are already Fiends, or something worse: 270
 Not Hell could mark them with a greater Curse.

Who knows the World?---Say Politicians;---we.
 Our Province is the Land; and our's the Sea.
 That Boast, replies the Traveller, is vain.
 The Land we challenge, Mariners the Main.--- 275

A Youth, whose Cheek is cover'd still with Down,
Swears the first Knowledge is to know the Town.
With him the Brothel is the wisest School.
He laughs at Pedants and the College Fool.---
Wing'd by their Cups, the Sons of Bacchus soar; 280
Their Claim asserting with a Midnight Roar.
Bold Censors these on Men and Manners sit;
And gossip Scandal in the Guise of Wit.
But chief, to sooth their Vanity, their Gall,
Whole Hecatombs of injur'd Women fall. 285
Harsh Sentence there the maudlin Judges pass.
A Female bleeds at ev'ry foaming Glas.

Thus for a Shadow, for a sounding Name,
We simply battle, with ambitious Claim.---
While thus our trifling Emulations glow;
Thine, Woman, is the nobler Aim; to know
Thyself, thy Station, and thy Task below.

Man next for Elegance of Taste contends.
Just here Propriety begins; there ends.
That Face, Park, Palace, Picture pleases.---Why?
Nature, without a Rule, informs his Eye.
Of Books, Style, Sentiment, he judges too;
At least not worse than other Critics do.

If

If others lean upon the Staff of Art;
The more his Praise, who scorns a study'd Part. 300

Humour's fine Salt, the Seasoning of Wit,
Are Points much labour'd at, but seldom hit.
In these proud Man, conquer'd by Shame, will yield;
And slowly quit the long-disputed Field.
There Nature fails him, he will own for once: 305
But then she doubly makes it up in Sense.
Plain are his Hints, and his Expressions good:
He speaks to make his Meaning understood.---

Check, Satire, check thy loosely flowing Rage;
Nor with gross Censure stain the solemn Page. 310
In such a wild Extravagance of Boast,
The Dignity, the Pride of Man is lost.
Down, Parallel; nor let the Scale appear:
Spare, Muse; and, Women, cease your Triumph here.
Left Men too low for your Resentment sink; 315
At Vanity, their chief Degradar, wink,
On Faults which should your Indignation raise,
Compassion wasted is akin to Praise.
This, only this let silent Pity bear.
Blush, weep and wound us with the falling Tear.

F I N I S.